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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING - ERITREA

¶1. The State Department warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Eritrea and recommends that U.S. citizens defer travel at this time. This replaces the Travel Warning dated June 11, 2008, and informs U.S. citizens that the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in Asmara is currently closed for all public non-emergency services. The Consular Section will continue to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens.

¶2. Since September 13, the Government of Eritrea has repeatedly, and in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, interfered with the unfettered delivery of the U.S. Embassy's diplomatic pouches. As a result, the Embassy is unable to receive critical supplies and materials necessary, including U.S. passports and other citizenship-related documents, for the conduct of normal operations. Until this matter is resolved, the consular section of the U.S. Embassy has no choice but to suspend all non-emergency services. This closure affects all routine services to American citizens, such as Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, passport services, and notarial services. American citizens who need routine consular services should consider traveling to the U.S. Embassy in Djibouti or the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

¶3. The Department of State recommends U.S. citizens defer travel to Eritrea due to restrictions on travel outside the capital city of Asmara and heightened tensions along Eritrea's borders with Ethiopia and Djibouti.

¶4. American citizens considering travel within Eritrea should be aware of the presence of large

numbers of Eritrean and Ethiopian troops along the Eritrean-Ethiopian border, and acute political tensions between the two countries. In March 2008, the Eritrean restrictions on diesel fuel supplies caused United Nations' Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea's detachments to withdraw from the Temporary Security Zone, leaving no international observers monitoring the border.

¶5. Since April 2008, Djiboutian and Eritrean troops have been deployed along the northeastern border of Djibouti. The Djiboutian government claims Eritrean troops have crossed into its territory and on June 10, 2008, Djiboutian and Eritrean troops exchanged fire along their shared border.

¶6. U.S. citizens are strongly advised to avoid travel near the Eritrean-Ethiopian border and to the Southern Red Sea region, including the port of Assab.

¶7. The Eritrean government continues to restrict the travel of all foreign nationals, including resident diplomats. These restrictions require all visitors and residents to apply ten days in advance for permission to travel outside Asmara city limits. As a result, the U.S. Embassy cannot provide emergency consular assistance outside of Asmara. The government of Eritrea does not inform the U.S. Embassy when American citizens have been arrested or detained.

¶8. Americans currently living or traveling in

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Eritrea are strongly encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Asmara in person or through the State Department's travel registration web site, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Eritrea. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of an emergency and provide updates on the security situations. The U.S. Embassy is located at 179 Alaa Street, P.O. Box 211, Asmara; telephone (291-1) 12-00-04; fax (291-1) 124-255 and (291-1) 127-584; web site <http://asmara.usembassy.gov/>.

¶9. For additional information, consult the Department of State's Country Specific Information sheet for Eritrea and the Worldwide Caution at <http://travel.state.gov>. American citizens may also obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada, or 1-202-501-4444 from overseas.

¶10. Minimize Considered.
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